

"Where's Laura? Maybe he's with her?" Ben was trying to keep his voice calm.

"She went for a walk." Meg stood up and put her hand to her mouth, her eyes wide "Where can he be?"

"Don't worry, we'll find him." Ben checked Jack's room again, while Meg hurried downstairs.

Outside everything was unnaturally quiet. Suddenly, she heard a cry. She looked around wildly; where was the sound coming from? The cry came again from the direction of the lake. Turning, she saw a small figure in the water.

Jack.

She ran, her heart beating fast. It was like some terrible dream where she ran and ran and yet got no closer to the tiny figure in the water. Her chest was on fire, every breath painful.

Suddenly, Laura appeared at the bottom of the hill, close to the lake. Without hesitating, she ran in and lifted Jack from the water. Meg ran across the grass, crying.

"What happened? What did you do to him?" She pulled her son away from Laura and held him close to her chest.

"Meg, I know you're upset, but you need to put Jack on the grass. We need to check that he's OK." Meg ignored her and held her son tightly. After a moment's horrible silence, Jack's cry filled the air.

"It's OK, baby. Mommy's here." Meg kissed his head.

Ben ran up to them. He took off his jacket and wrapped it around his son. Jack had stopped crying and was looking with interest from his mother to his father.

"Wet," he said, pointing to something on the ground. Meg looked down and saw her son's rabbit at the edge of the pond. She picked it up, looking at it. Jack never took the

rabbit out of the house. He was always frightened of losing it. Why would he bring it down to the lake?

Back at the house, she warmed Jack in the bath. She dried him and put dry clothes on him and then took him downstairs. Meg tried to give him his rabbit but he shook his head.

"Bad rabbit," was all he said. Ben took his son to sit by the fire and read him a story while Meg went to the kitchen to make them hot chocolate.

Laura was sitting at the kitchen table.

"Do you want hot chocolate?" Meg asked, without looking at her.

"No thanks. Look, have I done something wrong?"

Meg wouldn't meet the other woman's eye. She opened cupboard doors and took out cups.

"Meg, speak to me." Laura got up.

"What was he doing outside?" Meg asked angrily, turning to look at her friend for the first time. "How did he get out?"

"I don't know. I wasn't here. I was out walking. You were the one that was here, Meg."

"What are you saying?"

"I'm not saying anything. I'm trying to find out why you're so angry with me. What did I do?"

"Did you take my son down to the lake?" Meg demanded. She realized she was shouting but she couldn't stop herself. Waving her arm, she hit a cup, and it fell to the floor and broke.

"What's going on here? You're frightening Jack."